

Soda pop (clarification)

Food & Drug Administration's (FDA) proposal [CONSUMER REGISTER, July 15] to amend the identity standard for soda water ("soda pop," tonic or "soft drink") has caused confusion. The proposed amendment would end the requirement that the label list specific optional ingredients permitted in soda water. Instead, the manufacturer would have to list on the label the 1 or more specific optional ingredients that it does indeed use in making the drink.

Details—*Federal Register*: May 24, page 18285. Although the deadline for comments was July 23, consumers may still submit comments to Hearing Clerk, Food & Drug Administration, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20852.

Employment of handicapped

A Labor Dept. regulation explains duties of contractors, subcontractors & agencies to implement the President's Rehabilitation Act (Public Law 92-112) & requires them to take "affirmative action" in hiring & advancing qualified handicapped workers.

This regulation applies to all Federal Government contracts for personal property or nonpersonal services in excess of \$2,500. This means contracts must not discriminate against any employee or applicant because of physical or mental handicaps that would not affect his handling the job.

The regulation applies to employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer, recruitment or recruitment advertising, layoff or termination & pay rates in selection for training, including apprenticeship.

Contractors must review their employment practices to make sure opportunities are provided for the hiring of the handicapped, & they must also inform all their employees of their commitment to do so. Regulations became effective June 11.

Details—*Federal Register*: June 11, page 20566.

General Services Administration (GSA) is implementing its Federal procurement regulations to comply with the President's Rehabilitation Act (Public Law 92-112). Regulations became effective July 11.

Details—*Federal Register*: July 22, page 26642.

Cosmetic labeling

Sept. 9 is deadline for comments on Food & Drug Administration's (FDA) proposal to prohibit manufacturers of over-the-counter drug & cosmetic products from placing ingredient & other descriptive information on the back of the brand name label—thus making it necessary for the consumer to try to read through the container & the product's contents.

FDA feels the nature of the container & color & consistency of the contents may hinder the ability of the consumer to read the required information.

Details—*Federal Register*: July 10, page 25328. Send comments to Hearing Clerk, Food & Drug Administration, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville MD 20852.

Tire quality

Sept. 12 is deadline for comments on National High-

way Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) revised proposal on its Uniform Tire Quality Grading System on treadwear measurements.

The original proposal [CONSUMER REGISTER, Aug. 15] called for treadwear measurements to be made every 400 miles, but on the basis of testing, NHTSA believes the interval should be extended to every 800 miles.

When tires were tested every 400 miles, little rubber was worn off, which could result in the possibility of measurement errors.

Cost of testing would be reduced if the 800-mile standard were used.

Details—*Federal Register*: Aug. 9, page 28644; June 14, page 20808; Sept. 21, 1971, page 18751. CONSUMER NEWS: Oct. 15, 1971. CONSUMER REGISTER: Aug. 15. Send comments to Docket Section, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 7th St. SW, Washington, DC 20590.

Frankfurters & cooked sausage

Sept. 13 is deadline for comments on Agriculture Dept.'s proposal to permit the inclusion of additional meat products in frankfurters, bologna & similar products.

Agriculture had previously (Jan. 1, 1974) revised its standards for content & labeling of different types of frankfurters & cooked sausage. In the meantime, a number of cooked sausage processors requested clarification of "raw skeletal muscle meat" & asked Agriculture to adjust the standard to include other ingredients that the processors say have traditionally gone into sausage.

The processors added that it was an oversight on their part that these additional ingredients were not mentioned in the first place. Ingredients they want included in the standard are partially defatted chopped beef; partially defatted chopped pork; beef, veal, pork, lamb & goat cheeks; beef, veal, pork, lamb & goat diaphragmatic muscle meat; bacon or bacon ends or pieces; and trimmings of cured or cured & smoked meat food products such as hams, pork shoulders & beef.

The existing standards provide for the following:

- Inclusion of not more than 15% poultry meat in addition to the beef, pork & veal that went into the hot dogs. Under the new proposal, the 15% poultry limit remains.

- Identification of individual byproducts on the labels for "hot dogs with byproducts."

- The addition of 3½% of approved binders, such as soy flour, dried skim milk & vegetable starch. This must be listed on the label; for example, "frankfurters with byproducts, soy flour added."

- Total product must not contain more than 10% added water. Under the new proposal, this 10% water limit would remain.

Details—*Federal Register*: July 11, page 25517; June 5, 1973, page 14741; March 14, 1973, page 6898; Dec. 23, 1972, page 28430. CONSUMER REGISTER: July 1, 1973, April 1, 1973 & Jan. 1, 1973. CONSUMER NEWS: Sept. 15, 1973. Send comments to Hearing Clerk, Agriculture Dept., Washington, DC 20250.

Care labeling (continued)

Sept. 23 is new deadline for Federal Trade Commis-

sion's (FTC) request for comments on its care labeling rule for clothes. Original deadline was July 1, but interested parties asked for more time to comment.

Details—*Federal Register*: July 23, page 26755; April 2, page 12036; Nov. 22, 1972, page 24815; July 11, 1972, page 13560. CONSUMER NEWS: March 15. CONSUMER REGISTER: June 15; Dec. 15, 1972. Send comments to Assistant Director for Special Statutes, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Federal Trade Commission, Washington, DC 20580.

School buses

Sept. 24 is deadline for comments on National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) new proposal to require school bus seats to be stronger, higher & safer than those presently used.

The original proposal included all buses, but NHTSA now feels that seating safety requirements for intercity & transit buses are not justified, based on benefit & cost studies. (For example, surveys show that few passengers would use seat belts if they were provided.)

NHTSA proposes (1) seating systems of adequate height & surface area to reduce crash force, (2) padded seats, (3) passive system of child protection, (4) seat backs for students sitting on a bench seat & (5) cushion retention test to keep the cushion from coming loose during a crash.

NHTSA says these measures should result in a marked reduction in the facial & dental injuries that are associated with many school bus accidents. NHTSA agency proposes a Jan. 1, 1976, effective date.

Details—*Federal Register*: July 30, page 27585; Feb. 22, 1973, page 4776. CONSUMER REGISTER: April 15, 1973. Send comments to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 7th St., SW, Washington, DC 20590.

Air travel for handicapped

Oct. 7 is deadline for comments on Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) proposal to insure that the physically handicapped have access to air travel.

Late last year FAA held hearings in 6 cities in the U.S. to find out what kind of regulations would be needed to provide more equitable treatment for handicapped persons who wanted to fly. It said regulation would have to be consistent with principles of safety for all persons.

At present, each airline has its own regulations about transporting handicapped persons: Some require an attendant for each handicapped person, & some have different definitions for "handicapped."

The proposal would define "handicapped" as only those persons "who may need the assistance of another person to expeditiously move to an exit in the event of an emergency evacuation." Only these handicapped persons would be subject to restrictions.

Major provisions of the proposal are as follows:

- Airlines could not restrict the transportation of blind or deaf persons solely because of these handicaps.
- Anyone who presents a medical statement saying he does not need help in an emergency situation would be

allowed to fly. (Crutches or canes, if needed, would have to be easily accessible in case of an emergency.)

- Only one person restricted to a litter will be allowed on each flight, & he would have to be accompanied by an attendant.

- Under certain circumstances seat backs could be left in reclining positions for persons who are unable to sit erect. (Present regulations require seat backs to be in an upright position during takeoff & landing.)

Some other points in the proposal specify where handicapped persons may sit in relation to where other handicapped persons sit. (For example, they would have to be seated so only one handicapped person would be expected to use each emergency exit.)

Details—*Federal Register*: July 5, page 24667; Aug. 29, 1973, page 23352; June 5, 1973, page 14757. CONSUMER REGISTER: Sept. 15, 1973. Send comments to Office of Chief Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket, AGC-24, Federal Aviation Administration, 800 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20591.

Beer

Treasury Dept. is asking for comments on its proposal to require ingredient labeling for foreign & domestic beer & other malt beverages. A public hearing on ingredient labeling, scheduled for Oct. 1, has been delayed until after the first of the year—& Treasury has not set a new deadline for comments. It will accept comments at any time.

Treasury feels the regulation is necessary because consumers want to know—& have a right to know—what goes into the alcoholic beverages they buy.

Some of the highlights of the proposed regulation are:

- Labels would have to include a list of ingredients in descending order of concentration. (Water & incidental additives are excluded from the labeling provisions.) Minor ingredients, each of which makes up less than 0.25% of the weight of the product, would be listed alphabetically instead of in order of predominance.

- Words or phrases denoting quality, such as "finest" hops or "best" yeast would be prohibited.

- Amount of sodium would be identified—primarily for the benefit of consumers who must restrict their sodium intake—with a phrase such as "This product contains less than ____ mg. of sodium per 8-oz. serving." This would apply only to beverages that contain more than 8 mg. of sodium in each 8-oz. serving. Treasury says disclosing amounts of less than 1 mg. per oz. would not benefit the consumer.

- Common names for the ingredients would be used on the labels, such as malt, corn syrup & yeast.

A typical beer label might look something like this:

"Made from: malt, cereal grains, hops, yeast, with sodium decalcium EDTA, n-Heptyl-p-hydrobenzoate, propylene glycol alginate, sodium metabisulfite, enzymes. This product contains less than ____ mg. of sodium per 8-oz. serving."

Treasury proposes a January 1977 effective date for beer labeling to give brewers time to make label changes.

Details—*Federal Register*: Aug. 1, page 27812. Send comments to Director, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms, Washington, DC 20226.

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